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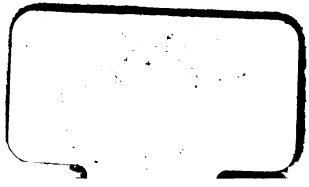

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# CHAMBERS OF IMAGERY

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# CHAMBERS OF IMAGERY

# CHAMBERS OF IMAGERY

BY GORDON BOTTOMLEY

ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET, W. M CM VII

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Fine money
(2 series)

## To SARAH GORDON

*Too many years have touched you now;*
*Your gentle hands that bless us yet,*
*The clearer candour of your brow,*
*Bring us our first regret.*

*This thing is hard to us, that while,*
*In ministrancies untired and new*
*Forgetting self, you wait and smile,*
*Yet time forgets not you.*

*I set your name herein—receive*
*My reverence with my poems' dear hours:*
*Ah, if they should endure, this leaf*
*Would hold you always ours.*

# A HYMN OF TOUCH

THESE magnificent senses
Are all life, one sense, enlightenment
Of any salvation ; poised eternal expenses
On loveliness, the one music, intent ;
Senses heightened, senses magnificent.

Every man of art has loved one sense,
Loved it into governance of his ways ;
Sound prepared Milton for his dense
Primitive blindness, mirror intense,
Dark mirror where heaven and each dark thing
repeats ;
Gautier guessed at life in his palate's space ;
Colour flavoured the Springtide that was Keats ;
Rossetti mistook odour into colour,
Even his full forms by odour were fuller.
A sense to each ; the ways of them were such.

I await the god, the illumined who shall know
The justice of each sense is tact, is touch ;
I await a kindler of the worlds to show
Many portions of art grown one by touch,

Touch like the unfelt wind that changes the stars ;
That melts the heart at news of women's old wars ;
Touch like the searching sympathies
Dipt Dian thrilled with her shrinking knees
To a dark wood well, deeper than woodland, set
Down silver grasses and small ferns pale with youth . . .
There are gold grapes whose contact we forget
Which leave an odourous mouth.

For touch is the spirit and rule of all ;
When the heart awakens and eyelids fall
Exquisite lashes on creeping cheeks are sign
Of the obscure ways in which used flesh grows fine.
The touch of brushes, the touch of strings and keys
With a crystal core that outward and inward slips,
Even music's interstellar silences,
Are but prolonged far-reaching finger-tips :
The touch of moonlight
Felt through noon-light,

The touch of mirrors upon the eyes,
Of mirroring water in a silver bowl,
The sense of being silked in dyes
For which a Venice merchant changed his soul,
Large expanses
Of seaward glances
Where the unseen world is felt by the sea's long roll ;
Such are its inward kingdom, each a hid device
By which the heart of things touches to guide and fire—
Touch with the palate ; touch with the nostrils ; touch with the eyes :
Touch with the reins and yearning ; touch with desire.

Love is every diverse way of it.
When the man beholds the woman a far touch slips
(Like cold still wines
Sipped to feel their sense of lines)
Luminously, unlit,
As under ocean's rims a star at dawn
To light hid waves ; the touch of lips
Divines position of body's and soul's degrees.
If death has drawn
One lover from another ere old peace,

The scars of what she once had said
Touch him, as though with growth discomforted.
Touch is understanding by relation,
Touch is sympathy and so creation.

The rose-dead ruins beyond the sky
Shelter its alien heart at night
And move me to reach again to the never nigh ;
The sleepless quietude of remote hills
Whose aëry waiting is alert with touch
Sets clearer light
Along their crest before the heavens begin—
A light of earth the heavens within,
That makes an interspace and fills
As when man's soul for his body is overmuch.

Shall we await for ever the ecstasy,
Wait, wait for ever and know we shall not know ?
O dusky cream of cherry bloom just high,
There was one such touch as yours from bough to bough
Hovering a little underneath
Yet almost about to lift in an unseen breath,
When in an early twilight of early May
We listened for one blackbird far away,

Precision of passion, the touch of a voice
On night, on our choice
Of hopeless retreating things for our joys.
Then ere a soundless dawn of early May
We listened as we lay
For the premonition of light in the wave of the
wakening birds.
Not physical touch in Chopin satisfied
Encloses the heart and girds ;
And when I reach my arms in pride
I reach my hands in vain ;
I take them back, until by yearning and pain
Contact comes and knowledge in the extent
Of all senses magnificent.

## OF HORSES

HOLD power between thy knees; yea, string thy wrists
To govern surges with a bitted thong:
These can transfer thy will and leave thee strong
As if thy hips continued his who twists.

If thou wert made another way about,
Power in thy forearms that must yet grow down,
Wouldst thou not stretch them thoughtlessly, unshewn,
Discovering leaps and gallopings thereout—

Never bewildered by four sounds beneath,
Nor thought that two must mean another nigh?
(Thus man is shaped to lift his arms on high
And tends to adoration as to breathe.)

Wouldst think that resting has no need to cower,
And, stayed on four dewed legs, slumber upright

Like a hoar Druid thing made huge by night.
When thou wouldst fight, then couldst thou
rear and tower.

Thou wouldst not fear, though hid and even
pied,
The colour of thy children when unborn ;
Thy strong accepting heart would judge man's
scorn—
Who loves strange hair but spurns a darker
hide.

Yet wert thou thus a horse thy sideways glance
Would see man large and unfamiliar ;
Eyes' covert nature wary and aware,
Loose tender mouth should make thee dumbly
man's.

### THE WHITE WATCH ☙

(*Opus* 28. *No.* 3.)

APPLE boughs lie in the eaves,
On windless nights the apple leaves
Chirp against the window panes
Slightly as a mist that rains.
Apple boughs lie on the roof;
Feet of more than one dove
(Doves asleep) stir at nights
Among the leaves as dark alights.
Summer nights, ah, summer nights
When she set the casement wide
With fingers like the leaves outside—
Like a moonbeam her white arm
Reached to winy apples, warm
As her bed already cooling:
While all the time she heard the lulling
Of the river sinking by,
Saw London's light pulse up the sky
Like darkness filtered pale and thin,
Like London's sound that hummed therein;

☙ After the design by Mr. C. H. Shannon.

Lonely footfalls sounded thin
In the street below the wall.
Will you make so lone a call,
Summer nights to come no more ?

Roses that under the moon seemed hoar
Looked mirrored in the sleeping house
By the small face through the apple boughs.
Empty nights will have no fruit
Of faces like large apples mute,
Summer nights to come no more.

Moonlight spreading on the shore
Of summer night and wedding eve
Waked her, wrought her to retrieve
All she wished she could forget,
Till her spent joys felt dearer yet.
Downstairs the tender evening through
No lamps were lit, no music drew
Her heart to meet the night, the dew.
Sweet comers in the high pale room
Fingered their orient scarves' perfume
And lost themselves down its dim length ;
Often they stretched a rustling length
That was the morrow's wonder robes
Carried in armfuls from wardrobes ;

Often they praised each other's choice
With finger and cheek, but with hushed voice
Lest the heart-lulling melancholy
Of that calm room be made less holy.

When the gracious evening ended
Muteness being with darkness blended,
They remembered, they remember,
Guests are slumbering in each chamber:
So the wedding girls must dip
Down deep large cushions and shawls to sleep
Round the bride's bed on her floor.

Once in that disturbing store
Of charms and secrets and surprise,
They clasp their mistress, cover her eyes,
Bare her and garment her for dreams,
Lay her in bed where moonlight brims,
With teasing touches and kisses shed
And merry blind wisdom lay her abed.

Wedding maids bridal girls
Shawled under dropt curls
Sink about her, whisper awhile,
Hear her pillow stir with her smile;
Then with plaintive longing think
Of her loss and gain, shrink
Till breathing lashes on small cheeks wink.

Why must she wake with moonlight's touch
And sleep no more, nor wake so much
As her night-life in the old days?
She watched the essenced moony rays
Stir the down on her maids' cheeks
(Down like their age counted in weeks),
Wedding maids bridal girls
With nightgowns hid in falling curls,
With arms and necks uncovered by sleep
That will reveal hid thoughts acreep.

She thought of all to-morrow's birth,
Of her new joy and coming worth;
She slipped the coverlid from her,
Tip-toed like girls' tresses astir
Between her girls of virgin lore
Who floated under her on the floor
Like her thoughts of the next night;
She quietly lit the night-light
Which had burnt by her mother's death bed;
She shrank as though fallen from darkness o'er-
head.
A pearl seemed ever to be at her lips;
She seemed to hold in her fingers' tips
A palpitant pulp, soft fruit alive,
She felt her flesh a cushion between
Herself and all she touched, a screen

Life and mere real things to sever,
Like a mist upon a river
That will not let a mazarin
Dying butterfly fall in.

She opened then her cupboard door
To stroke over over and o'er
Lawns and lace, ribands and veil
With which she would be scarcely pale
When morn her clinging webs should deck
In the gown with love-knots low on the neck,
And maids should bring spread down their arms
Trains and under-tints, jewels and charms.

She twitched for prayer the little heap
Of voile hemmed for her first sleep . . . .
Forgot the silence she must keep,
And a bride girl peered at her from the floor.

## LARCHES

LET us walk in the wood,
In our aisle of the larches ;
The winter dawn parches
Your brow in your hood,
But the pine dell is dimmer
Than this twilight, your hair,
And Summer's green glimmer
May wait for us there.

Ah, Mine, dawn is older
(Some sweet breath has stopped)
Since when on your shoulder
Pale breast-down was dropt,
And we saw up the mist
Of the inner larch-webbing
A drooping owl ebbing
So softly we kissed.

What shadow went there . . .
Press more closely ; I hearken ;
O, will your voice darken ?
'Tis a thing we must bear.
I wait and I wonder—
A gleam half unknown
Is breathing—is blown—
Slips under—slipt under. . . .

## THE VIADUCT

AND when I found the narrowing estuary
I saw a railway bridge through twilit mist;
It seemed by veils suspended to exist,
But a hushed tide washed under clankingly.

A train from London crossed it in the night:
I woke and saw a tossing burning mane,
And felt some tragic woman passed again
With trailing tresses in dispurposed flight.

Unending luggages dragged past all day,
Piled trucks, tarpaulin mounds, and heavy vans;
Considering this monotony some chance
Steep contour of its iron sad array

Made me remember thus it must have been
That Cæsar's trampling Triumphing appeared—
Elephants heaving, fuming flames upreared,
Stacked waggons, slow unthinking slaves between.

## IN CHURCH

THE priest, in thoughtless daily use,
Delivered the fairy tale of Eve :
I felt what made good Greeks believe
That Bacchos came from a thigh of Zeus,

Thanked my complete omnivolent God
Who made the serpent with suave power
In that ungoverned knowing hour
Creators see He must have trod. . . .

I thanked the God for all the joy
Ordained for me by Eve's best sin:
Except for God she might have been
Stainless and ever a garden-toy.

In her the Mother sinned for us,
Bringing us evil and more good ;
Growth and a soul from this ensued.
'Twas soul's first instinct so to choose.

The preacher read a parable
About a sower sowing seed,
Yea, and about each separate deed
It did to places where it fell.

Some fell upon the stony ground
And swiftly bred abundantly :
This seemed most beautiful to me,
To make such barrenness abound.

Yet most I praised the stony soil
That did so rare and great a thing,
Spending its power to serve its King,
Unmasked by man's officious toil.

Arable man, removing stones,
Might well educe tame hundredfolds,
But not that ardent burst of golds
That proud tired yielding to the sun's.

### THE MILLINER

THE hats are really large this season, Madam; their brims no longer curve to your hair-knot so that only a shadow or a flower may droop between. You will be obliged to dress your hair much higher; this brim extends almost from shoulder to shoulder, and the crown will need to touch more firmly at the back.

Alas, Madam, I cannot shew you perfectly; the fashion has come unexpectedly, and my model had to change the mode of her coiffure so immediately and completely that an hour ago she fainted from the pain. No, Madam; there can be no danger from my girls. . . . Her hair is purified each morning, and her health is untouched; but she is to be married in the Summer.

It is impossible not to have the strings. We attach them to the edges of the brim, and tie them much more lightly. They must be of ribbon as wide as both your palms, and almost as long as your skirt.

I cannot give you those shades, Madam ; they are not used together now, and could not be effective.

These plumes would be more becoming than all else I could suggest. . . . Ah, yes, they are torn from living birds to preserve their changing light ; I remember you have always refused to share the cruelty, but that is a past fashion now, Madam. You will not have them ?

I could gather a wreath of clouded chiffon into this ample brooch. You do not admire jewelled hats ? But consider this one pearl—I am assured it cost the lives of two men ; its unusual tinge of blue would harmonise cunningly with the grey chiffon. You choose the brooch ? Very well, Madam.

## TANAGRET

DEAR lady of a tomb,
Her ashes' thin grey bloom
Wrinkled your frills with hue
Who once was you.

A lover of women tall
Made you so slim and small
To keep the shape and whole
Height of a soul.

O, madam, madam, please
I would cherish your little knees
Because she laughed at stir
Of silk on her.

Curved body of light earth
Filled for unending birth,
Your mastering god's hand-tips
Gathered your lips.

Dead fingers felt it sweet
Such bosoms to complete ;
I desire to touch such tulles,
Turn women to jewels,

Hint skirts of pale large shawls,
Pompeian parasols
Grown unexpected hats,
Stroke women as cats—

It trances that a bland
And momentary hand
Should leave both hidden flesh
And its silk mesh.

An opaque amber death,
Dusty as with old breath,
Joins me with past things now,
Lady, in you.

## SONG FROM A MASQUE

WHAT do the maids at shearing-time?
One doffs her skirts and into the water,
For all the last year's lambs have sought her
Sniffing 'tis she who once brought grain
To fill their mothers' dugs again;
Mazed by her sheep-bell sing-song rime
She draws one into the foam-veined pool
And furrowing through its deep wet wool
Slips her brown fingers small yet full.

What do the maids at shearing-time?
One at the dark, webbed shippon's door
Hears muffled sounds on an earthen floor;
Thence she toils with a haltered ewe
Up to the barn to other two,
Two maids who hum a sheep-bell rime
And part the fleece in the left hand's span
Ere it curls cream-thick from the shears grey-
wan—
A maid can clip as well as a man.

## SAILORS

### I

When he came to Circe's house
In a garden in a wood
Gates of brass so tall so narrow
Diapered with blossom bee and sparrow
Shewed a girl with silky blouse
Frilled and ruched and flowered with blood.

Gates of brass so safe for peeps
Where his eye winked wing for bird
Shewed him juicy petals dropping
Where swished flouncy skirts were never stopping,
Slim carved shafts half hid by heaps—
Fruits brocades wings jewels and curd.

Circe tore her silky sleeves
In her eagerness for whips;
Where her little wolves were fawning
Underneath her bright wistaria awning
Straight she took their chains in sheaves,
Lashed them then from throat to hips.

Under a trellis of roses worn
Circe's ladies quite quite fair
Clasped maimed wolves that winced and whimpered ;
Near their feet two strutting dove-hens simpered
While with batter of feathers torn
Doves fought flying in the air.

II

Why does the land cease here ? Determinedly,
Quietly it decides, and thus devolves ;
Such motionless, such stark unhesitancy
Troubles the dreams in me
Like sudden and invincible resolves.

The miracle of water always wrought,
Stability which silent fish believe,
Limits beyond our breath, valleys uncaught,
Burden mistrustful thought
With senses how that bosom could deceive.

Man's life should be by water ; if its course
May slide more easily in folly and haste
'Tis kindly lost, bubbles betray no source ;
If wise by grace and force,
Better a thing so trivial be effaced.

The serried noses of unready ships
Peer out like lurking rats from rifts of stone :
Are these the leaning birds of fledgy tips
That, loosed, with shivers and dips
Depart by separate oceans and alone ?

Let me enlarge the world and know what verge
Escapes this mask of earth for balance thrown :
And I would seek how alien laws can urge
Fearless recoiling surge
Against surrounding rhythms to obey the moon.

Embark, my heart : the lip of all the land
Is under flamelets that outline the dark ;
Lost figures with white vacant faces stand,
Hand moves to hidden hand ;
Rope slips, the near thwart sinks . . . My heart,
embark.

## THE WHITE WATCH ☙

(*Opus 27. No. 2.*)

O LIFELESS garden of the moon
You look as if I am unknown ;
Across the valley the trees twist
As though bewildered by the mist—
They are strange because I have not come.
The moonlight makes the pale owl dumb.
Like window veils in mirrors a hum
Of little flies waving their feet
Dims the air like a flicker of heat—
Before my window they spin and rise
In a shapeless cloud as wide as my eyes
Because the moonlight draws long streaks
Of earth-breath warm as girls' moist cheeks
Wavering up in vibrant veins.

They taper like my body's pains.

Moonbeams must have made these stains
Of whiteness on my narrow feet—
Through my long nightgown and one sheet
The moon has soaked night after night
Dissolving in me the linen's white.
There was a moon when I last stood
Loosing my flowered silk and my mood,

☙ After the design by Mr. C. H. Shannon.

Looking down into air as slow
As water with a light below . . . .
But I think it must not have been this moon,
For I have lain long though it comes soon ;
A chill slim fever has made me thin
Until my soul has whitened my skin
And keen lithe shudders have left me slight—
As though I had drunk too much moonlight.
There may have been days, but I only know
Nights and the moon I lay below ;
And they watched, Elise and Rosanelle,
With unbound hair and robes that fell
To reveal their feet, sleep-robes so fine;
They gave me liquids crystalline
And white food toned with heavy white wine ;
They watched that I did not leave these spaces
And go with the moon to other places,
For I dare not sleep lest I lose hold
And die in my sleep like a flower in a fold
When it slips from your neck inside your things.
O, I would sleep as still and clear
And hollow as the deep light here—
Suspended from earth's wanderings.
But Rosanelle and married Elise
Say my fever's secrecies
Are dry, so they may lie on the floor
And sleep to listen for my door . . . .

I know they could waken if they heard
The little chir (as of cooling curd)
When bedclothes settle on one just dead.
Yet I have wavered from my bed
Through the scent of their bodies to pass;
I have taken their lantern of cinnamon glass
(Litten to look at me in the dark
Moon-beams stir up beyond their mark),
I have hung its cord my wrist to mar
That I may feel an attendant star
While now between the shutters I gaze
To find my antique moony ways . . . .
The other stars, as I Hesperise,
Crawl up the heavens like old flies.
The darkness of air beneath its light
Makes it my mirror infinite—
Darkness sinks in mine eyes so far
I can feel them repeat each floating star,
Until mine eyes become the air
Whose darkness seems some moon-skirt spare,
So soft that the quivering touch of sight
Sinks beyond its down of light.
Pale inflammation of the moon
With intense clearness strokes me too soon;
I am cool as the red flowers hovering slow
A little over the garden below.

## EARLY VENEZIAN DETAIL

LITTLE cat of an angel,
Did the Virgin kiss you?
Will the poor Dear miss you,
Pretending with your lute?
She has the other angel
Perching near Her tissue,
Cheek against Her foot,
Peeping over his flute.

Sleeky purring angel,
Did She, feather by feather,
Seek a red and green one
For the Child to play?
Will the other angel
Shut his wings together,
Spread for mocking and preen one,
Flutter the Child away?

Little cat of a darling,
Did you bring the Virgin
A glass with meadow-spurge in
To light Her window-sill?
With faint and dainty snarling
Your wingy brother Rosy
Set a columbine posy
For Her skirts to spill.

## A HYMN OF FORM

THE holy virtue of living, the soul's delight,
The sense of ordination that accuses,
The excellent wonder of limit whence day and night
Gather eternity and change,
Yea great desire so great that it refuses,
And reverence that loses,
Are form ; the nature of godhead to derange,
To keep all vivid, fruitful, vitally strange ;
Form without reason, with no explanation by uses.

Water's power and presence
Composed by a far moon's crescence,
The warm huge lazy drift of the bended sea :
The change of a short season,
Nude rhythm, no growth, no lesion,
That makes a worm be earth, wet earth be a tree :
The mood of a girl to weep,
Laugh, weep, or kiss her scars :
The hills that never go to sleep ;
White mountains, youthful stars :

We do not forget these things. We know
There is no progress anywhere—
By dark recurrence alone we grow
Endless, immortal, godlike, bare,
And do not care.
The power of Form divines us, heavy and slow,
Heedless and fair.

This is the instinct of our perfecting:
The lust of creation, the ache for forming,
The mathematic beauty warming
As intellectual exact ardours sting
Till proud inevitable solutions spring.

Form is eternal father of existence;
Form is change of colour; it is distance—
That faint last air of inward light
Which stirs our only divination
That where we stand is infinite.
Form works within the purging and the strife
Of prayer and other acts of imagination;
In the disconcerting logic of a woman,
Delicate and inhuman,
Which makes all living nothing in desire of life.
A vacant thing it seems
Touched with inscrutable gleams,
Till knowledge of shadows leaves
Mysterious life which cleaves—

The body most revealed by perfect clothing.
Form is completion and will say
(As cypress turns its edges to the air,
Unguidable and spare,)
"Bring not one touch; take that away—
A little more and there would be nothing."

There is a planet girds itself with rings;
A woman fashions slow unconsciousness,
Her body quiet as a mind.
Blindness and Blake and all primeval things
(Blindness, that moonlight of the senses' space)
Contain a primitive order unconfined,
Depths of denial, wells of might—
Form without reason, with no explanation by uses:
Rapt in gigantic joy that with no thinking chooses,
It knows its mastery; and this delight
The Jews by their Jehovah signify
Who thrust the darkness rolling down the sky.
The spider's web is part of the spider's nerves;
Its edge of lines merges as near to curves
As intuitions of colour to shapes that stir them,
Yet no curves ever come;
But, if a touch makes curves, the thing will fear them

And reach a dreadful thigh because he is dumb.
Form, grown so real and indivisible,
Broods on itself as though it could not cease—
White eagerness transcending up a rill
That seems like peace.

Peace? The creators are forbidden peace;
To reach down fire and laughter from the skies
Leaves a new longing and a hard unease
As if to suffer the gleam on the pale seas
And that which in it cries.
Peace comes alone by form just perfected,
By moments that may bring
An earth to death, discovering,
Before one ruining mountain can be shed,
Rabbits' twitched ears above the lengthening grass
Heightning the hush upon the evening
Till rapture seems quite poised, never to pass.
Form comes, peace comes; the heart stands still, then reels;
(Night makes a mirror of a window-pane
And shows one waiting for love her perfect cheek);
One moment, as when ousels pause for rain,
A bloom is on the air, until it feels
As if, after all, God is and is about to speak.

The past survives chiefly in its arts; art must always be paramount to man, for only by it can he conceive the nature of creation.

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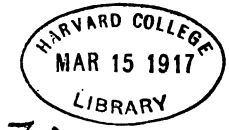
(SECOND SERIES)

ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET, W. M CM XII




Fine money

London

## To MY PARENTS

*Too many books of voiceless verse*
*I have piled up in all the years*
*Since in the first I set your names.*
*If I would even tell your claims*
*To love and all heart's gratefulness*
*The barest sum would ask no less*
*Than all the poets' opening pages:*
*I bring no thought of praise or wages,*
*I would but tell my thankfulness*
*That in these later days of stress,*
*When life slackens and stints its range*
*And the world turns to loss and change,*
*We are all still together here*
*And I can set your names most dear,*
*Your names like presences benign,*
*Once more within a book of mine.*

NOVEMBER 5TH, 1911.

## EAGER SPRING

WHIRL, snow, on the blackbird's chatter;
You will not hinder his song to come.
East wind, Sleepless, you cannot scatter
Quince-bud, almond-bud,
Little grape-hyacinth's
Clustering brood,
Nor unfurl the tips of the plum.
No half born stalk of a lily stops;
There is sap in the storm-torn bush;
And, ruffled by gusts in a snow-blurred copse,
"Pity to wait" sings a thrush.

Love, there are few Springs left for us;
They go, and the count of them as they go
Makes surer the count that is left for us.
More than the East wind, more than the snow,
I would put back these hours that bring
Buds and bees and are lost;
I would hold the night and the frost,
To save for us one more Spring.

## A HYMN OF IMAGINATION

IMAGINATION'S towers appear,
And every tower is a steep prolonging
Of the earth's radius dark and sheer.
Like swart birds thronging
Into a sunset safe and near—
Or down horizons shimmering hence,
Swift precipices of radiance, baffling wings—
Or gleaming white against the dense
And thunderous presences of immortal things—
Imagination's measureless towerings
Bear down upon the beds of reality,
Accede to gravity for inmost law
Where the earth's radius and their cores agree
To raise externes of awe.

Baseless Invention is the newer god,
A liquorous and incontinent quality,
The blind men's fingering upon the veil.
Here intellect intrudes, the mode
Of building wonders mentally;
And in this styptical, this pale
And secondary blindness of the brain
The limits of experience decide.

Mental immoderation is in vain;
It closes up, where sympathy makes wide
Man's comprehension of dissimilar things;
It sets man to believe himself his guide,
His standard too; ay, and it has denied
Imagination's murmurings
(The only conscience that is not pride)
Because Imagination hath dissension
From brain-wrought marvellings.
The nourishing of religions is Invention,
Wonders and furbishings;
There merchants of the incredible, in contention,
Postulate Divinity apart
From knowledge or perception; crude desire
Seeks an Unknown for gaping at, a mart
Where virtue whips God's first debentures higher:
Nor may Imagination's shining
Reveal in them the mirror where
God shines reply most heavenly fair—
Divinity dawns through passions of divining;
Who yearns for God will seek Him in the heart.

Imagination does not thus devise
Wilful and rootless miracles:
It works by still and inward symmetries;
Sounds, when resolved into clear harmonies,
Achieve such bright coincidence

As shakes man's spirit in its wells
When something borne becomes a sense
Of understanding, yet something else
Than understanding—
A hushed commanding
Of destinies
Beyond our eyes,
Ability to conceive the nature
Of every creature, every stature,
Ability to live in every form,
To know the passions that have passed,
Stillness or storm,
In nobler hearts or hearts of sin—
All things without at last
Answering to things within.

Imagination is acceptance wrought
When things beyond ourselves with faint sounds press
Upon the limits of our consciousness;
Man is not loftier by taking thought,
By domination, by knotting hard and straining
Upon the convolutions of his will
As one who tests a cable though remaining
Heedless of what it stays or binds—
The qualities of tense cables, to such minds,
Being sufficient for salvation's thrill.

A little princess dawning through a mist;
An old, old horn
In forests forlorn;
An ageless crying
When night and rains have kissed
And dark wide wings are vying
With clouds' and the earth-shadow's flying;
The fragile proud and passive shapes
That bear the burden of all men's love for ever;
Legend, faëry, enchantments of each weaver
Of glimmering romance (escapes
From blinding customary sights),
Of shadows that forecast
Man's implication with the earth—
Sea, fire, and mountain, and their sprites
Of danger, tempting, warning, mirth,
Which signified that kinship in the past;
Dead inventions these remain
In the rigid sinuous brain,
Unless tuned sympathy shall twin
Things without to things within—
Then Imagination sheer
Makes them intimate and near,
And their essences appear.

It is the knowledge of responsibility.
It is the permeant air that spirits breathe,

The high pure ether where appearances
And other tricks of shadow-casting substance must unwreath
And only essences can be:
It can inform all wonder, all degrees
Of lean ideal virtue, and all charm
Of haunting far-off lights and low
Lost murmurs; and with power it can endow
The gods that bless or harm:
But in man's common impacts here and now
Its fierce illumination is most plain—
Man's deeds are seen to work in him again;
Though done in secret they must change his brow.
To look upon the things that must be borne
Has, by Imagination, no less pain;
But, if the looking be without men's scorn
Of all they deem they understand,
We have our revelation close at hand.
We see new harmony advance,
We need no promise of continuance;
By life and nature, earth and man,
Our indicated destiny we scan;
We are advised to spend no breath
In echoing heaven from walls raised up by death;
By flower and beast is it not clear
To be resumed in God we ripen here?

WHEN Robert put the seed in, seed in, seed in,
Grey dust floated at his knees—
Sower swinging like a mower,
Stepping over nest of plover,
Up the furrowed slope with ease.

The rooks were white with sunlight, sunlight, sunlight,
When Robert put the seed in;
Gulls with narrow wings no whiter
Flew before them, floated lighter,
Far from sea-wet cliffs they breed in.

Early night sent Robert home, Robert home, Robert home;
Sunset sent the wind to blow
From the East and dry the loam
Grey as cloud-hills, ere should come
A star like burning snow.

THE golden still November days
Seemed an immortal pause's glow,
And through the light transfiguring haze
White gulls sought Robert at the plough.

Although upon the new-turned soil
December's soddening waves would beat,
He hastened on that Springtime toil
That he might sow his Winter wheat.

One morn I felt my sleeping cease—
Out in the dark farewell was said:
And Robert is across the seas,
So far away he might be dead.

Yet, now that January is nigh,
The winter wheat's green spikes appear:
How can they keep such urgency
And grow when Robert is not here?

## IN JANUARY

O, SHEPHERD out upon the snow,
What lambs are newly born? . . . .
I see his long, long shadow go
Across the fields of morn.

Ere dawn the snow-light in the room
Awoke me, and I saw
A pallid earth, a cloudy gloom,
A shape that stirred my awe.

I know the clear untrodden snows
That hide the winter wheat;
The greyer fields wherein he goes
Are grey with pitting feet.

He feels not how I watch him creep,
He thinks he is alone;
He searches for the heavy sheep
Each windward hedge of stone.

I keep my bed in weariness
When workers have gone forth;
I watch that silent man grow less
Into the snow-packed North:

And men have died in this old room,
Through thrice a hundred years,
Who saw the shepherd in the gloom,
The shape that never nears.

Briefly I watch; but then I go,
The room will know me not;
Yet from my window, o'er the snow,
When I am well forgot

Shall unknown men look forth to scan
Each far unchanging tree,
And see a dark and lonely man
Still creeping agelessly.

## THE SLAVE MARKET

In bronze (true flesh of thought) stern shifting contours.
Drawings wherein the pen-strokes yield and harden
Until each interspace is ivory.
Paintings where crises of desire have set
A glow between the blending of clear deeps,
And also knowledge of godhead and decay.
Medals with women and bowed unicorns.
A golden snake for Venice ladies' teeth.
Poems in types like agate intaglios.
Pale wine-cups out of Greece stained with dim deeds
Of gods like men, as though with juice of grapes.

Such things, all things that men have made by passion,
Are curst with the old restlessness of beauty,
The loneliness of beauty, the aloofness.
They may remain within a little room
To light a loving one; but death divides them.
They go to make fame certain for some man

So ignorant of them he has grown rich:
He turns from them, he lends them unto nations
Until he is sure that nations know them his.
They shall be found in cities ruinous.
They do not know their tenants, nor their values
Bred by much fingering in the market-house.

Sackt Troy and queens at auction: if thou wert there,
Wouldst thou buy Helen ere her husband came?
Passing from hand to hand so passively
Helen was Helen's secret, Helen's own.
Pass thou and gaze, she is more greatly thine.

## TO IRON-FOUNDERS AND OTHERS

WHEN you destroy a blade of grass
You poison England at her roots:
Remember no man's foot can pass
Where evermore no green life shoots.

You force the birds to wing too high
Where your unnatural vapours creep:
Surely the living rocks shall die
When birds no rightful distance keep.

You have brought down the firmament
And yet no heaven is more near;
You shape huge deeds without event,
And half made men believe and fear.

Your worship is your furnaces,
Which, like old idols, lost obscenes,
Have molten bowels; your vision is
Machines for making more machines.

O, you are busied in the night,
Preparing destinies of rust;
Iron misused must turn to blight
And dwindle to a tettered crust.

The grass, forerunner of life, has gone,
But plants that spring in ruins and shards
Attend until your dream is done:
I have seen hemlock in your yards.

The generations of the worm
Know not your loads piled on their soil;
Their knotted ganglions shall wax firm
Till your strong flagstones heave and toil.

When the old hollowed earth is cracked,
And when, to grasp more power and feasts,
Its ores are emptied, wasted, lacked,
The middens of your burning beasts

Shall be raked over till they yield
Last priceless slags for fashionings high,
Ploughs to wake grass in every field,
Chisels men's hands to magnify.

## BABEL: THE GATE OF THE GOD

Lost towers impend, copeless primeval props
Of the new threatening sky, and first rude digits
Of awe remonstrance and uneasy power
Thrust out by man when speech sank back in his throat:
Then had the last rocks ended bubbling up
And rhythms of change within the heart begun
By a blind need that would make Springs and Winters;
Pylons and monoliths went on by ages,
Mycenae and Great Zimbabwe came about;
Cowed hearts in This conceived a pyramid
That leaned to hold itself upright, a thing
Foredoomed to limits, death and an easy apex;
Then postulants for the stars' previous wisdom
Standing on Carthage must get nearer still;
While in Chaldea an altitude of god
Being mooted, and a saurian unearthed
Upon a mountain stirring a surmise
Of floods and alterations of the sea,
A round-walled tower must rise upon Senaar

Temple and escape to god the ascertained.
These are decayed like Time's teeth in his mouth,
Black cavities and gaps, yet earth is darkened
By their deep-sunken and unfounded shadows
And memories of man's earliest theme of towers.

Space—the old source of time—should be undone,
Eternity defined, by men who trusted
Another tier would equal them with god.
A city of grimed brick-kilns, squat truncations,
Hunched like spread toads yet high beneath their circles
Of low packed smoke, assemblages of thunder
That glowed upon their under sides by night
And lit like storm small shadowless workmen's toil.
Meaningless stumps, upturned bare roots, remained
In fields of mashy mud and trampled leaves;
While, if a horse died hauling, plasterers
Knelt on a flank to clip its sweaty coat.

A builder leans across the last wide courses;
His unadjustable unreaching eyes
Fail under him before his glances sink
On the clouds' upper layers of sooty curls
Where some long lightning goes like swallows downward,
But at the wider gallery next below

Recognise master-masons with pricked parchments:
That builder then, as one who condescends
Unto the sea and all that is beneath him,
His hairy breast on the wet mortar, calls
"How many fathoms is it yet to heaven!"
On the next eminence the orgulous king
Nimroud stands up conceiving he shall live
To conquer god, now that he knows where god is:
His eager hands push up the tower in thought . . .
Again, his shaggy inhuman height strides down
Among the carpenters because he has seen
One shape an eagle-woman on a door-post:
He drives his spear-beam through him for wasted day.

Little men hurrying, running here and there,
Within the dark and stifling walls, dissent
From every sound, and shoulder empty hods:
"The god's great altar should stand in the crypt
Among our earth's foundations"—"The god's great altar
Must be the last far coping of our work"—
"It should inaugurate the broad main stair"—
"Or end it"—"It must stand toward the East!"
But here a grave contemptuous youth cries out
"Womanish babblers, how can we build god's altar
Ere we divine its foreordained true shape?"

Then one "It is a pedestal for deeds"—
"'Tis more and should be hewn like the king's brow"—
"It has the nature of a woman's bosom"—
"The tortoise, first created, signifies it"—
"A blind and rudimentary navel shows
The source of worship better than horned moons."
Then a lean giant "Is not a calyx needful?"—
"Because round grapes on statues well expressed
Become the nadir of incense, nodal lamps,
Yet apes have hands thad but and carved red crystal"—
"Birds molten, touchly talc veins bronze buds crumble
Ablid ublai ghan isz rad eighar ghaurl. . . ."
Words said too often seemed such ancient sounds
That men forgot them or were lost in them;
The guttural glottis-chasms of language reached,
A rhythm, a gasp, were curves of immortal thought.

Man with his bricks was building, building yet,
Where dawn and midnight mingled and woke no birds,
In the last courses, building past his knowledge
A wall that swung—for towers can have no tops,
No chord can mete the universal segment,
Earth has not basis. Yet the yielding sky,

Invincible vacancy, was there discovered—
Though piled-up bricks should pulp the sappy
balks,
Weight generate a secrecy of heat,
Cankerous charring, crevices' fronds of flame.

## BABYLONIAN LYRIC

NIMROUD was a hunter, striding
A belated mastodon;
Forests where he took his riding
Lay like corn when night came on.

Nimroud slid beneath the table
After seven vats of drink:
When he rose he builded Babel
Tottering on heaven's brink.

Babel fell in storm, but Nimroud
Went to sleep among his vats,
Where his body hid a dim rood,
Drawing down a plague of gnats.

By his elemental snoring
Baffled gnats swirled in his nose;
Thick ones up his brain crept boring,
Where their bodies swelled and rose.

Such his pain and such his clamour
That an Ethiop grey from fears
With a giant's wooden hammer
Beat his head four hundred years.

On his eagle's-breast-filled pallet
Nimroud swore that he was god
('Twixt the wearings of the mallet)
Tressed with life, with deep death shod.

## NETTED STRAWBERRIES

I AM a willow-wren :
I twitter in the grass on the chimney-top;
The apples far below will never drop
Or turn quite bright, though when

The aimless wind is still
I stand upon the big ones and I peck
And find soft places, leaving spot and speck
When I have munched my fill.

Apples and plums I know
(Plums are dark weights and full of golden rain
That wets neck-feathers when I dip and strain,
And stickys each plumy row),

But past my well-kept trees
The quick small woman in her puffy gown,
That flutters as if its sleeves and skirts had grown
For flying and airy ease,

Has planted little bushes
Of large cool leaves that cover and shade and hide
Things redder than plums and with gold dimples
pied,
Dropping on new-cut rushes.

At first I thought with spite
Such heady scent was only a flower's wide cup;
But flower-scents never made my throat close up,
And so I stood in my flight.

Yet over all there sways
A web like those revealed by dawn and dew,
But not like those that break and let me through
Shivering the drops all ways.

Though I alight and swing
I never reach the things that tumble and crush,
And if I had such long large legs as a thrush
The web would tangle and cling.

## ERGOT

PHIAL of soft brown poison in my hands,
Pollute good water now and I will drink.
I sicken at the taste,
And yet my throat thirsts on.

There is a feeling in the cold soft taste
As if disgusting penetrating sins
Brutalise, fill me with joy
And raptness to smell filth.

I am refined with stirs of cruelty,
Cruelty to myself of drinking more;
I shiver until my sides
Are stiff. My lips seem thick.

I felt blood gurgle far, far down my throat
As one perceives a very little light
Down a dark narrow well.
The earth dropt out of space.

But now the sound has ceased and I may breathe
As often as I wish—if I breathe gently.
My heart is quiet and swift,
Like tinily pulsed cats'.

The soft brown poison makes long tentacles
Of every vein and nerve—as if a spider
Reaching all ways at once
Knotted me head and foot.

The griping creeping irresistibly
Tightens; I feel so helpless and so safe.
My fingers and my heels
Prickle. My eyelids smart.

## NIGHT AND MORNING SONGS

### I

Out of the high skies birds are falling,
White birds, dark birds, sailing down,
No bird crying, no bird drawling;
Leaves in Autumn, petals in Spring,
So would wander and slant and wing,
But no tree ever went up so far
To hide a mountain and a star
And loose its leaves gone brown.

### II

I am tired of the wind—
Oh, wind, wind, be quiet . . .
I am burdened by the days
Of wailing and long riot.
The heavy trees are thinned;
The clouds lose their ways . . .
There's no rest in my mind.

When the wind falls the rain falls;
The air has no more breath.
The ceaseless "Hush" of rain
Is what eternity saith.
The hills grown near and tall
Let down a misty mane . . .
Loudlessness weighs on all.

## III

Only the darkening heights
Can save us from the burning sky;
The forest's upward flights
Would crumble into fires that fly,
But the chill valley grows more deep,
The moving glooms from under creep—
There are no trees, save in some gleam
Of bird-bent spray or quieter stream;
And with the gleam, beyond the gleam,
A thin and sombre horn unites—
A question and a cry.

Faint and afar there ride
Passionless faces and one pale horse;
Such stillness and stern pride
Can never weary or change its course.

And O, the horn, the horn yet calling!
Lost waters now prolong its falling;
The high unresting hunt has gone—
Are we not summoned and undone?
The light has gone, the sound has gone—
And in the heart a joy has died,
An old horn sounds remorse.

## IV

"She shall be buried by her Antony:"
*Antony and Cleopatra*, Act v., Sc. 2.

Where is that tomb of Antony's?
Is Cleopatra there?
Have the old desert's atomies
Silted among her hair?
Is even her last dark throne-room sacked;
Have delvers hastily unpacked
Some nameless mummy with shut eyes,
And sold the vanished fair?

Nay, but she walked again to-night:
So whence is her return?
Can nothing end her? Asps do bite,
But 'tis our breasts that burn.

Puft Antony is soon forgot
(He was well ridded, was he not?):
His ruinous mate for peril's bright,
Secure no man can spurn.

## V

My moon was lit in an hour of lilies;
The apple-trees seemed older than ever.
It rose from matted trees that sever
The oats from the meadow, and woke the fillies
That reared in dew and gleamed with dew
And ran like water and shadow, and cried;
It moistened and veiled the oats yet new,
And seemed to drip long drops of the tide,
Of the mother-sea so lately left.
Feathers of flower were each bereft
Of colour and stem, and floated low;
Another lily opened then
And lost a little gold dust; but when
The lime-boughs lifted there seemed to go
Some life of the moon, like breath that moves
Or parting glances that flutter and strain—
A ghost with hands the colour of doves
And feet the colour of rain.

## VI

*Sanctuaries*

There is a chamber in the dawn
Sought by a bird alone—
A cloud, a gleam, a veil withdrawn
On brighter veils beyond,
Glistening with one far ringing tone,
One fluttering mote and blond.

There is a chamber in the night
Sought by a girl alone—
A secret place white after white
With inner veils more dim
And farther places whitely strown
As though with thoughts that swim. . . .

## VII

Between April and May
No more can pass
Than the edge of a mist
Or a sidelong ray
From the moon or the glass
Where the little moons hide
To shew me your wrist
On whiteness and nothing beside.

The night is still,
The darkness knows
How far away
A wavering rill
Of warm air goes;
Though no bough hums,
Between April and May
A streak of plum-blossom comes.

## VIII

*Elegiac Mood*

From song and dream for ever gone
Are Helen, Helen of Troy,
And Cleopatra made to look upon,
And many a daring boy——
Young Faust and Sigurd and Hippolytus:
They are twice dead and we must find
Great ladies yet unblemished by the mind,
Heroes and acts not cold for us
In amber or spirits of too many words.
Ay, these are murdered by much thinking on.
I hanker even for new shapes of swords,

More different sins, and raptures not yet done
Yet, as I wait on marvels, such a bird
As maybe Sigurd heard—
A thrush—alighting with a little run
Out-tops the daisies as it passes
And peeps bright-eyed above the grasses.

## IX

### *Dawn*

A thrush is tapping a stone
With a snail-shell in its beak;
A small bird hangs from a cherry
Until the stem shall break.
No waking song has begun,
And yet birds chatter and hurry
And throng in the elm's gloom
Because an owl goes home.

## THE END OF THE WORLD

THE snow had fallen many nights and days;
The sky was come upon the earth at last,
Sifting thinly down as endlessly
As though within the system of blind planets
Something had been forgot or overdriven.
The dawn now seemed neglected in the grey
Where mountains were unbuilt and shadowless trees
Rootlessly paused or hung upon the air.
There was no wind, but now and then a sigh
Crossed that dry falling dust and rifted it
Through crevices of slate and door and casement.
Perhaps the new moon's time was even past.
Outside, the first white twilights were too void
Until a sheep called once, as to a lamb,
And tenderness crept everywhere from it;
But now the flock must have strayed far away.
The lights across the valley must be veiled,
The smoke lost in the greyness or the dusk.
For more than three days now the snow had thatched

That cow-house roof where it had ever melted
With yellow stains from the beasts' breath inside.
But yet a dog howled there, though not quite
lately.
Someone passed down the valley swift and singing.
Yes, with locks spreaded like a son of morning
But if he seemed too tall to be a man
It was that men had been so long unseen,
Or shapes loom larger through a moving snow.
And he was gone and food had not been given
him.
When snow slid from an overweighted leaf,
Shaking the tree, it might have been a bird
Slipping in sleep or shelter, whirring wings;
Yet never bird fell out, save once a dead one—
And in two days the snow had covered it.
The dog had howled again—or thus it seemed
Until a lean fox passed and cried no more.
All was so safe indoors where life went on
Glad of the close enfolding snow—O glad
To be so safe and secret at its heart,
Watching the strangeness of familiar things.
They knew not what dim hours went on, went by,
For while they slept the clock stopt newly wound
As the cold hardened. Once they watched the
road,
Thinking to be remembered. Once they doubted

If they had kept the sequence of the days,
Because they heard not any sound of bells.
A butterfly, that hid until the Spring
Under a ceiling's shadow, dropt, was dead.
The coldness seemed more nigh, the coldness deepened
As a sound deepens into silences;
It was of earth and came not by the air;
The earth was cooling and drew down the sky.
The air was crumbling. There was no more sky.
Rails of a broken bed charred in the grate,
And when he touched the bars he thought the sting
Came from their heat—he could not feel such cold. . . .
She said "O, do not sleep,
Heart, heart of mine, keep near me. No, no sleep.
I will not lift his fallen, quiet eyelids,
Although I know he would awaken then—
He closed them thus but now of his own will.
He can stay with me while I do not lift them."

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# CHAMBERS OF IMAGERY

(FIRST SERIES)

BY GORDON BOTTOMLEY

PRICE 1*s.* NET

## SOME PRESS OPINIONS

### *The Daily Chronicle*

"Mr. Bottomley has always been an artist faithfully and curiously endeavouring to follow and capture his private intuitions about life, and several poems reveal his unique personality through beautiful forms. Every man lives 'in the dark, in the chambers of his imagery,' and only the artist and the lover can share his with other men; they alone are aware of these possessions. But Mr. Bottomley loves their remotest corners . . . and in this book we see him—on his knees or on a rippling lofty ladder—peering into the darkness and bringing back what he can."

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### *The Daily News*

"Mr. Gordon Bottomley lives in a sort of enchanted garden, with its drowsy palace, surrounded by old apple-trees, some of them always in blossom. The moon always shines upon his kingdom; it is never broad day there, twilight perhaps, but generally night, night with the moon, night with adventures and dreams, night with the owls crying, and with something wonderful ever trembling beyond the watcher's eyes. . . . He will always find a few to whom that dream land is

beautiful. His poems depend for their effect on their power to raise an hallucination in the mind of the reader. . . . If the hallucination comes, it is beautiful, it haunts the mind, it is like coming back to the mind of childhood. The mysterious turrets, high up in the castles, with lights burning in their windows, seen from far off in the forests, barked at by the distant dogs, fill the mind with a sort of delighted terror; they are so mysterious, such beautiful and strange things must happen in them. . . . The deeds done in them have the suggestions of wonderful beauty."

### *The Pall Mall Gazette*

"Mr. Gordon Bottomley gives us a characteristic volume. . . . It has a curious, pungent power of its own. The poems to Mr. Shannon's pictures, in this book, are as good as any."

### *The Literary World*

"These verses . . . possess a power of recalling scenes so that we not only see them, but we realise them by the many senses through which we grasp a scene in real life. The poem called 'A White Watch' gives us sight and sound and scent and the shiver of touch."

### *The Planet*

"The author is never commonplace. . . . His thoughts are arresting and interesting, and the chambers of imagery in which they are clothed are very uncommon and rare. . . . The 'Hymn of Touch' is very fine. . . . All the co-related senses are celebrated in this ode: their inter-play of emotion, their mutual intensification until their rainbow colours combined burn to the point of white heat, and sense is merged in Spirit. . . . Far the best poem is the beautiful 'Hymn of Form.'"

### *The Evening Transcript* (BOSTON, U.S.A.)

In a long article by Mr. W. S. Braithwaite on Mr. Bottomley's dramatic work:

"Not often out of Shakspeare does one meet with a like success in the treatment of such unearthly beings. I believe Mr. Bottomley is a poet whom English literature will come to regard in the possession of a power remarkable for its sterner emotions beyond any contemporary poet; and who, as a dramatist, will present these emotions in character and action upon the stage in no distant future to the pulsation and surprise of human audiences."

LONDON
ELKIN MATHEWS
VIGO STREET, W.

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